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CLAFLIN'S

THOUGHTS IN VERSE

MANCHESTER, N. H.

1893

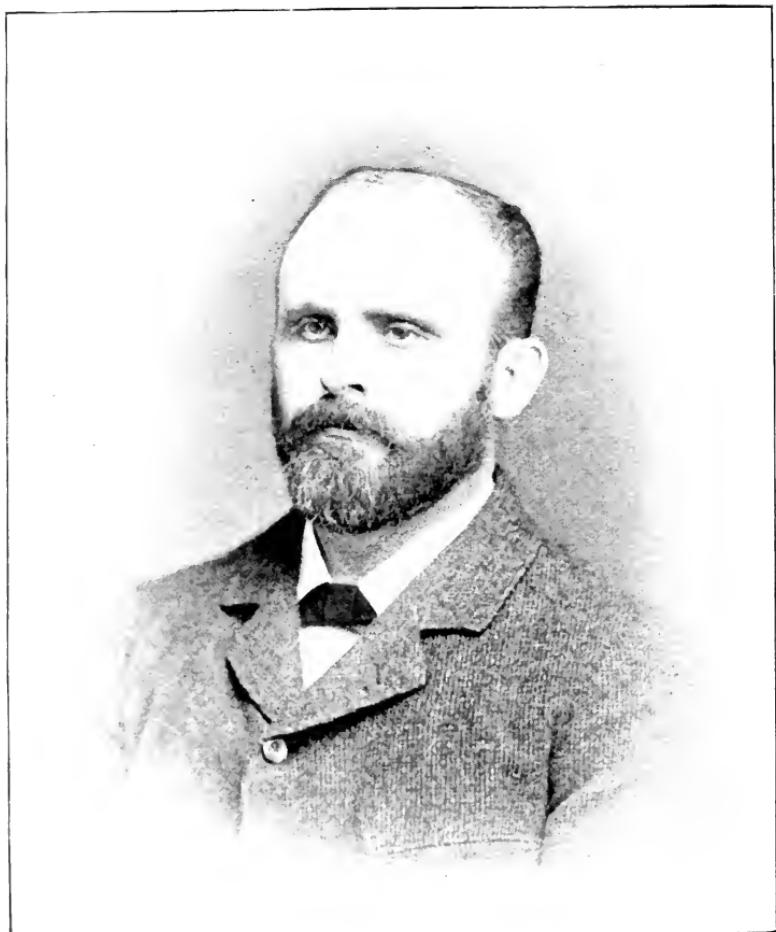


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PRESENTED BY







SUMNER F. CLAFLIN.

THOUGHTS IN VERSE

THAT I HAVE GATHERED BY THE PATHWAY
OF LIFE

IF ANYTHING HEREIN IS TRUE, 'TIS GOD'S, ALL ELSE IS MINE

PUBLISHED FOR AND AT THE REQUEST OF FRIENDS

BY SUMNER F. CLAFLIN

MANCHESTER, N. H.

SECOND EDITION.

MANCHESTER, N. H.

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1893

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1893
A. L. B. 1893

Dedicated
TO MY SAINTED MOTHER
MARY ELLA SOUTHARD
TO WHOM I OWE MANY OF THE CHARACTERISTICS
WHICH HAVE BLESSED ME
AND HELPED ME IN A HUMBLE WAY, I HOPE
TO BE A BLESSING TO OTHERS
BY A GRATEFUL SON



CONTENTS.

	Page.
AUTOBIOGRAPHY	9
ONLY A PICTURE	11
A SISTER OF MERCY	13
HOW IT CAME	15
THE CITY OF NIMROD	16
THE REEL	17
AN OPTICAL ILLUSION	19
CURSED; A STORY OF ROCK RIMMON	20
LET THIS LOVE BE IN YOU	22
THAT QUEER LADY	24
GRACE	25
A RUM TRAGEDY	26
OLD GLORY	28
IN THE LAND OF "IS TO BE"	29
WHERE DWELLEST THOU?	31
FROM BOW HILLS	32
THE CLOUDY WEDDING DAY	33
WAITING	34
ERNEST	35
A MORNING WALK TO ROCK RIMMON	36
TO THE CAPITALIST	37
A LAMENT	39
COLEBROOK	40
INTANGIBLE VERITIES	42
ALONG THE SANDS	44
THE SLANDERER	45
THE MAN WHO WRITES VERSES	46
MY FAITH	47
THE UNCLEAN HEART	48

DENIAL COMES SO EASILY	50
RECOMPENSED	52
PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN	53
THE NEXT ROLL CALL	54
COOS	56
THE RICH FOOL	58
THE TRAIN THAT DID NOT CROSS	60
NIGHT	62
THE SALVATION ARMY	63
IN THE NIGHT	65
ONE HOPE	67
A WEB OF WORSTED	69
AT LONG BEACH	71
SUNRISE AMONG THE WHITE MOUNTAINS	73
THE KING OF DAY	75
THE MILL OPERATIVE	76
A LESSON	78
OUR TALENTS	79
HUNGER DOES NOT REASON	80
IDLENESS	81
LOUIE LAUREL	82
OH, FUTURE !	84
A VIEW FROM LOMBARD'S HILL	85
AS SEEN AT SIXTEEN	86
THE CITY FOLKS	87
THINK OF THE POOR	88
POPLAR LEAVES	89
FINALE	90

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

To the reader of the following pages I will say that I have not written a book to be criticised, but rather gathered the scattered fragments of my mental history which from time to time have run the gauntlet of local newspaper sanctums and lodged in my scrap-book. Not a few of my friends have urged me to print these fragments in book form, and, being convinced that it can do no harm to gratify my friends, and incidentally myself, I herewith present some of my "Thoughts in Verse."

Respectfully yours,

SUMNER F. CLAFLIN.

MANCHESTER, N. H., August, 1893.



AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

FRIEND: Would you know me? Consider whether you know yourself. I am told that I was born November 28, 1862, in a very common sort of a farmhouse, about half a mile from the railroad station in Auburn, N. H. When I was about six months old our family removed to Lyme, N. H., and in my eighth year we moved to Columbia Valley in the wild and wooded Upper Coös. Here and in Colebrook my boyhood days were spent. They were tame and uneventful, and very much like those which have succeeded them. I went to school, I worked on the farm, I trucked around the village with my father's team, and did odd jobs. As a boy I had religious impressions very early, and these, with a taste for reading, I fondly believe, developed my mind. I read Pilgrim's Progress, dreamed of giants and dragons, wrote sermons, stories, and rhymes of the most wearing kind, before I was twelve years old; but if I inherited my literary tastes from my mother's people, I must have received a decidedly practical turn of mind from my father's side of the house, for I gravely informed my father on one occasion that "I didn't think the Claffins were built right for ministers," and I have also since discovered that "literary fellers" are not always appreciated according to their own estimates. If you wish to know what the party I am describing has been through, I will tell you.

At seventeen years of age he went to work as a printer's apprentice. Within a year he bloomed out as a joint editor and proprietor with A. A. Harvey of the "Colebrook News," having increased the circulation from 600 to 1,000. Sold out the

paper after five months to John D. Bridge, the former owner, and afterward traveled for several papers as business agent in New Hampshire and Vermont.

Leaving journalism in 1882, he entered the employ of the Manchester corporation, and a year later, work being slack, spent three months promoting "The Atlantic," a beach and mountain summer season paper, published by J. D. P. Wingate, at Exeter, N. H., returning to the mill in August, 1883, to take charge of the sample card-making work in the finishing department. In connection with this he began editing the Concord, N. H., "Tribune" in 1884, and has continued the same up to this date, with the exception of three months in 1892. Has been honored with offices of trust in church, lodge, and party too numerous to mention, all of which has been duly appreciated, and was a candidate for elector on the People's Party ticket with Weaver and Field, in 1892.

What others have seen in S. F. Clafin to thus honor him has always been a mystery to me. He is neither brilliant nor profound. He has neither the qualities of a martyr nor a statesman. All I can say in his favor is that he loves nature, God, and man, so far as his knowledge of them extends. He frankly admits the limited nature of his own acquirements, and his great debt to the world of mind and matter for what he is. At thirty years of age he greets you from the pages of this book as one who dimly realizes the meaning and the possibilities of human existence, and, having been granted a few good thoughts from the great Fountain of Intelligence, humbly offers them, with due apologies for whatever native crudeness may be found in his work, to the public.

MANCHESTER, N. H., August, 1893.

THOUGHTS IN VERSE.

ONLY A PICTURE.

“ Make me a picture of baby,” I said to the artist one day,
“ A picture of my little baby, whom death has taken away ;
 Make his hair sunny and golden, and tangled about his face,
Not brushed, as in silence we saw it, but full of life-like grace.

“ Make his eyes blue as in summer glows the morning sky ;
 And, say, can you light them with gladness, that cannot fade
 or die ?
Curl his red lips and round them, and dimple his cheeks just
 so,
(But his nose was a pug, no matter, you’d call it funny, I
 know).

“ And give him a checkered apron, with pocket for ’kerchief
 and toys,
And some copper-toed boots with red tops, and a drum to
 make a noise.
(We used to scold Tommy for that then, but so quiet our
 rooms have grown
That I long for the romping baby and cry when I’m alone).”

The artist painted my picture with patient and tenderest art ;
He seemed to feel my longings and the hunger of my heart.
He outlined a chubby angel and gave him a form most fair ;
He put the fresh glow on his soft cheek and the sunlight in his
hair.

The drum, the boots, and the apron were just as like as could
be,

And the hands that held the drumsticks were the ones he
reached to me

When the choking night-scourge seized him and bore his life
away,

But the eyes were not my baby's, their light was too cold and
gray.

I do not blame the artist. His art was tender and true.

And the grace of his nameless cherub I loved, and so would
you,

But, oh, the light of my baby's soul, glowing in his eyes,

Greets me no more—methinks 'tis hid with God in Paradise.

A SISTER OF MERCY.

The years have flown swiftly, so swiftly,
Since my loved one, my brave and true,
Died like a man in the battle front,
With never a murmured adieu.

Then I longed for death to bear me
Away from my hungry heart,
Like a welcome friend to take me,
O'er the gulf that held us apart.

In that night I was thrilled by a vision
Of meekness and beauty rare,
Wounded and seeking the wounded,
A crown of thorns in His hair.

“ Hungry art thou and troubled,
And wilt thou be satisfied,
Thinkest thou I am worthy,
* Then come and be my bride.”

I followed him, broken with anguish,
To the battlefields where there lay
The torn and bleeding and dying,
Of pitiless war the prey.

I loved them because He loved them,
And joy filled my heart to know
That my Bridegroom was ever beside me
And pleased that I soothed their woe.

And one day — one day unending,
When these earthly days are through,
I'll meet my brave boy, and my Bridegroom
Shall be his Bridegroom, too.



HOW IT CAME.

“Oh ! papa, there’s snow on the ground and snow in the air,
And a party of snow birds right over there
By the lilac bushes, all coated and white —
Papa, dear, how could the snow get here in the night ? ”

“ My lad, when you were asleep in your bed,
An old gray giant, with stealthy tread,
Crept up to the mountains that skirt the sky
And peeped over these valleys on the sly. . .

“ He saw the frost in the silent air,
The fields and the gardens brown and bare ;
'They want my blanket,' quoth he with a frown,
And when he was ready he let it down.

“ Over these valleys he stretched his arms,
Over the cities, the woods, the farms,
And out from his fingers a snowy sheet
Dropped ever so silently at his feet.

“ The moon had veiled her misty face,
The stars sank backward into space,
And the snow king walked all the long, still night,
To cover the world with his robe of white.”

THE CITY OF NIMROD.

Nimrod built Babel, the city in a far away eastern land.
Nimrod, the mighty hunter and chief of a kingly band,
And gathered the wealth of the Orient into his lordly store.
Hung his walls with the trophies of chase and plunder and war.

At the top of his Tower of Babel, his vassals gathered round.
The Infinite Being met him, with a rushing mighty sound
Which shattered the tower they builded, and palsied the tongues
of men,
And the dream of the puny builder came to a fitting end.

And many a Nimrod since that time, and many, perhaps, un-
born,
Fill full their halls with beauty and their stores with wine and
corn,
Nor quit their greedy robbery of need at the beck of pride
Till they, like the mighty hunter, walk captive at Death's side.

Great was the mighty hunter, while his unseen watcher delayed,
Commanding with princely power till at last he, too, obeyed.
But better is he who holds his soul, ready, and calm, and true,
To him defeat is victory and death brings endless life to view.

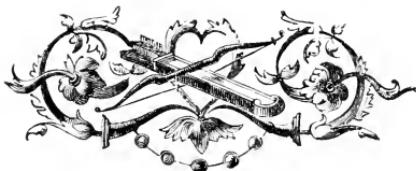
THE REEL.

To wee-o-wee-o-wee-o-wee catch snap,
Skeining the yarn ;
So many knots of woolly threads,
“ How many times does the wheel go round,
Say, grandmarm ? ”
“ How many flossy golden heads,
How many glossy brown ? ”

To-wee-o-wee-o-wee-o-wee catch snap,
Winding away
Soft warm mittens, comforting socks,
“ How many needlefuls in a skein,
Dear grammie,” say
Questioning children with curly locks,
“ Oh ! many and many again.”

To-wee-o-wee-o-wee-o-wee catch snap,
Dropping a thread,
Pick it up quickly. to-wee-o-wee,
Grandmother’s reel goes flying away.
Small Dorothy said :
“ Grammie dear, when I is ’oo and ’oo is me
I’ll make ’oo some stockings some day.”

To-wee-o-wee-o-wee-o-wee catch snap,
Mischievous Dot
Is whirling the reel like mad —
Oh ! what fun — what a tangled mess
Old grammie thought,
Waking up quickly, “ Dot, you’re bad
(I must ‘ha been sleeping I guess ’).



AN OPTICAL ILLUSION.

It was on a summer's day,
I was raking in the hay,
When I saw a little
Yellow bellied
Spider—
Oh ! I spied'er.

I pulled the stopple from the jug,
When I saw that leggy bug
A dancing on
The surface of
The cider.
Old hard cider.

I jabbed at 'er with a stick,
But she jumped so mighty quick
That I plunked the
Liquid element
Beside 'er ;
Then I eyed 'er.

Suddenly she disappeared,
Just precisely as I feared,
I am thinking
I'd been drinking
Too much cider,
Old hard cider.

CURSED ; A STORY OF ROCK RIMMON.

The fogs of a fresh June morning rise silently over the lake ;
The sweaty earth breathing upward hangs dewdrops on bush
and brake ;

A rainbow in mist hangs over the Namaske's foamy way,
But no eye of greedy paleface measures its silvered spray.

The gentle wind of summer goes soighing through the pines,
Shaking the buds and blossoms that hang on the dewy vines ;
On Rimmon's bald crest in silence a dusky woman stands,
The wild fog-swathed landscape with eager eyes she scans.

There are tears on her swarthy cheek, and tears in her brim-
ming eye

That seeks for a sign of her missing boy, or his wee baby cry
There in the silence, broken only by beast and bird,
Manitou hears a mother's prayer and answers — not a word.

The heron hovers stealthily where Piscataqua's waters flow.
The gray mists vanish and the sun pours scorching rays below ;
Among the pines that raise their heads around Rock Rimmon's
feet,

Within a grassy opening her darling lies asleep.

The eyes of the mother rest on the tawny face of her child,
With a joy unspeakable and a love that is undefiled ;
But the eyes of a beast in hiding peer out from the tangled
briars,
Snapping with hunger and burning like liquid fires.

One swift-winged moment passes, then his hot, fierce breath
Is on the cheek of the child like the baleful wind of death ;
Was white-robed Justice sleeping when the blood-flecked pan-
ther dined ?

Was gentle Mercy paralyzed ? — were the eyes in heaven blind ?

She stands a study in horror, a picture of helpless woe,
Drawn by her fixed gaze heedlessly toward the scene below,
Drawn by her mother love — to be dashed upon ragged stones,
To writhe and breathe her life away in pitiful, useless moans.

The sun glides over the dome of day and sinks on the evening side,
And the fair twin mountains raise their heads its dimming disc
to hide ;

A swart-faced savage steals within the opening at Rimmon's feet,
Slays with a blow the torpid brute, glutted with human meat.

A broken bow on the grassy turf ; the bloody blanket of his son
Clutched in stiff hands, her hands, his own, God pity this help-
less one ;

The rocks are more tender than his poor heart, whence joy and
hope have fled.

The prowling cat and the rattlesnake and the eagles bury his
dead.

But among the hills and beside the lake and over the piney
plain

Was heard for many a day the yell of a beast with a human
frame ;

And when he died or where he died his fellows did not know ;
But they nor their children forgot the brave thus cursed by
Manitou.

LET THIS LOVE BE IN YOU.

A part of our works are folly, but more are embittered with sin,

And striving for selfish pleasure we lose it again and again ;
To toil is the lot of mortals and though a few may evade
The heritage of the many, their burden is harder made.

For what they gain from the treadmill is cankered and rusted
and spoiled,

With folly their lives are encrusted, with sin their souls are soiled ;

A part of our love is lustful and more is selfish and vile,
The love that will live eternal can neither blind nor defile.

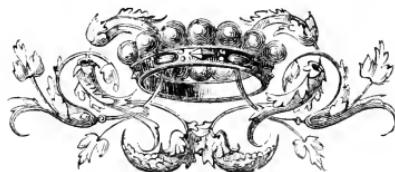
To love is the mission of mortal, by love to serve is divine,
But hatred, lust, and envy shall perish without a sign ;

For these profane the temple of reason and like vampires kill
the soul,

The world's love in part is lustful, but selfishness fills the whole.

There is a vision of beauty, it may be yours and mine,
The light of the traceless ages may be in our lives enshrined ;
It shone from Bethlehem's manger, it sparkled on Galilee,
It poured through the veil of the temple that all the world
might see.

God's love on the altar of malice, a sinless offered Lamb,
This is the vision of beauty, the sure hope of every man ;
A love that shall conquer malice, a hope that defies despair,
Shall spread in every faithful soul this vision of beauty fair.



THAT QUEER LADY.

[The stooping figure of a faded looking little old lady is a familiar one to people arriving or departing from the Manchester station of the Concord Railroad. She may generally be found hovering near the waiting rooms or standing motionless and voiceless in the immediate vicinity. It is said that she was unfortunate in a love affair many years ago, and has never been able to rid herself of the idea that a doubtless false lover will sometime return to her. 1890.]

I stand and wait when the crowd throngs by,
With my weak hands folded — I know not why ;
I stand and wait ; the curious stare,
They jest, they question, I do not care.

They say my eyes are faded and weak,
The storm and the sunshine have bleached my cheek .
And my clothes are dusty and shabby and old —
I knew and I needn't have been told.

But I bother them not as they pass me by,
They shall not see me strive or cry ;
I stand and wait, how long — how long !
To make mirth and tears for the passing throng ?

“ Why am I waiting thus ? ” God knows,
He could release me if He chose ;
What if my love I could not forget,
But dwell in its hopeless ashes yet ?

Is my penance to wait till the golden key
Turns in the pearly gate for me ?
My sad heart faints and my eyes are dim,
But I'll wait and watch till the trains come in.

GRACE.

[A poor young woman gone to the bad committed suicide under peculiarly sad circumstances, in Manchester, about the time this was written.]

Was it her fault that nobody claimed her,
And, taught by their elders, the good children shunned her ?
That for most of their mad pranks every one blamed her,
Adopted — a come-by-chance — the ban she was under ?

Was it her fault that God made her pretty,
That homely and dull maidens feared her and hated her ?
Was it her fault if wise men, and witty,
Followed her wickedly ? Fortune had fated her.

E'en as the wild beast will tread down and lacerate
Many a victim he cannot devour ;
So men, brave men(?) with foul lust insatiate,
Dishonor and cast away buds of an hour.

Was it her fault if, betrayed and deserted,
(And dug by their cruel hands the pit opened wide)
She piteously plead with her slayers for mercy,
But vainly ? Was it her fault that she died ?

A RUM TRAGEDY.

[This wretched affair actually occurred as narrated, upon the road leading from Manchester to Hooksett.]

The woods were full of melody
That early summer's day,
And calm and peaceful lay the green
Fields all along the way.

The clear air shimmered in the sun,
The world was all aglow,
And not a sign in nature broke
The harmony below.

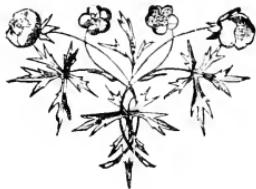
The busy city filled with life
Sent forth a sound of toil,
And who could know a serpent lay
Concealed there in his coil ?

To strike the old man in his age,
The young man in his strength ;
Take wisdom from the one, and break
The other's power at length.

What does the calm sun look upon
Along the wooded way ?
A cyclone, a thunderstorm,
Or a tiger and his prey ?

Nay, but a frenzied flying brute,
Two crazy drunken men,
Filling the air with maniac yells,
A crash — and silence then !

Oh, bloody is thy work, thou red
Coiled serpent in the glass !
Thy victim in his gore lies dead
Upon the wayside grass.



OLD GLORY.

Brave flag, who shall tell thy glories o'er ?

Ensign of liberty and of truth,
Guardian of hope from shore to shore,
Day star of the nation's youth.

Thy bars are red, protector, friend,
Thou hadst a bloody mother in the past ;
Red bars we raised, but found between
The white of dear-bought, welcome peace at last.

Thy white stars shining in the blue
Strove long together, causing many a tear :
Then wast thou torn, but God is true,
And every star remains more fair, more dear.

Black was the night thou camest from,
Deep was the darkness of the land ;
This ensign to the nations shown,
Revealed the brotherhood of man.

How many stars, Old Glory, shalt thou wear ?
How many ~~s~~ands are there along thy sea ?
Thou every nation's galaxy shall bear
And wave to the borders of eternity.

IN THE LAND OF IS-TO-BE.

It was not heaven, but it was passing fair,
With nought of covetousness, false pride, or care ;
The streets were clean and every house was neat,
And lawns and gardens made the clear air sweet.

No dudes nor idlers strolled in street or park ;
No thieves nor charlatans whose deeds are ever dark ;
From drunkards, beats, and tramps the place was free,
Its use and beauty captivated me.

As strains of music burst upon my ear,
I saw a stream of happy people coming near,
From mill and shop and field and farm away,
Music and song did end the toiler's day.

I went about the city thinking there
I might find crime and poverty and care ;
But all were prudent, rich, and sorrow free,
Sharing God's ample bounty equally.

Pride had no votaries, Mammon's shrine was still,
Use was king, esteem spurred on the will ;
Lust bought no more, for frailty had no need,
There were no poor to be the prey of greed.

The school, the church appeared on every hand,
Their wise, sweet children, the riches of the land,
I asked one, wondering, When should these things be ?
" When gold is dross. When man from want is free.

" When all are equal in fact and not in sham,
When man acknowledges the brotherhood of man ;
Then to this Is-to-be the world is marching on,
The day is breaking, night will soon be gone."

Let every face be bright, for hope is dawning ;
Let every heart be light to greet the morning ;
Let every hand be strong, for truth shall reign,
And love shall teach us all in Jesus' name.

“ WHERE DWELLEST THOU ? ”

Men live like gods, as though
No justice could o’ertake them ;
A merry round they run,
And ’tis but just begun
When Fate cries, “ Halt ! ’tis done.”
And death will make them
God’s equity to know.

Men die like dogs, in fear
Lest shortly they shall find
Earth’s treasures, empty bubbles,
Their honors, loss and troubles,
Their virtue, grass and stubbles ;
The heart, the life, the mind,
Our richest treasures here.

To live in heaven or in hell,
Whither are we tending ?
The seeming slips away,
The real man cannot stay,
Life dwells not in the clay,
All clays are blending ;
In heaven life shall dwell.

FROM BOW HILLS.

[Looking down the Merrimack Valley upon a hazy August day, in 1890.]

I saw, but yesterday, in the misty distance
A brick-built city lying 'neath the sun,
So still, no sound against the air's resistance
Was flung to me from out its ceaseless hum.

Weird clouds were drifting in the air of August
Athwart the valley from far Francestown ;
And in the north, beyond the " smiling waters,"
The white hills loomed like ghosts, my vision's bound.

This piece of earth, this vale in fair New Hampshire,
Lay like a picture in a sky-girt frame ;
I thanked my God for the sweet gift of seeing
A vale so beautiful of all His grand domain.

I thanked Him ; then, from higher hills of Beulah
God raised my vision to a city fair,
A Heavenly city, but filmy clouds were drifting ;
I only glimpsed the glories waiting there.

THE CLOUDY WEDDING DAY.

Blest bride that the sun shone on.
Will you show me your heart and say
That e'er since your wedding day
No ill tide to you has come ?

Bodes ill the pattering rain.
But what if your love, your light,
Has ever been fair and bright,
Care you if the sign proved vain ?

The clouds do not touch the sun.
Sunshine follows the shadows' train,
And pleasure comes in the place of pain,
And golden the clouds become.

WAITING.

The wheels of progress go round and round,
Slippery with blood from many a wound ;
And the great world moves so slow, so slow,
Oh, God ! does the world move on, or no ?

With the lens of faith and the eye of hope
We draw for the world a horoscope,
But doubt and folly combine to tear
Great gaping rents in the picture fair.

If thou be for us, O stars of the sky,
Thou suns that shine divinely high,
If thou, God, helpest to lift thine own,
Why weary and faint are the toilers grown ?

We strive, but he did not strive nor cry ;
We faint, but we never reach Calvary ;
We fret, but he with God sat down,
From henceforth waiting to take his own.

O eager spirit, be thou still
Till the good Lord comes, for come he will ;
And truth shall triumph and God shall reign,
And none of his martyrs shall die in vain.

ERNEST.

[Ernest Southard Claflin, the little bud God gave and took away from us August 21, 1891.]

I lost a little baby,
At least I thought I did,
When we put him in the casket,
And sadly shut the lid.

I could not see the angels
That waited by his side,
And took him to their bosoms,
When my wee baby died.

I only knew the sorrow
That parent hearts can feel,
That hope alone can soften,
And time alone can heal.

The latest opening rosebud
Fell first upon the ground ;
The latest sinless spirit
Was earliest to be crowned.

A MORNING WALK TO ROCK RIMMON.

I walk in the glow of morning,
In the bare brown fields of spring,
To the gray rocks rising their sober crests
Above the trees where the robin nests
And the little brown birds sing.

I shun the jarring, the voices,
The noisy engines of men ;
My shrine is the Mayflower's hidden nook,
Filled with sweet music, the gurgling brook
That runs through the quiet glen.

How like a cooling mother hand
On the brow of a tired child
The winds of the piney woods caress,
The breath of spring comes down to bless
My soul with influence mild !

I sit on the sun-kissed rocks,
As quiet and moveless as they,
And watch the winding fog belts rise
Over the rivers, to melt in the skies,
And I dream of the far away.

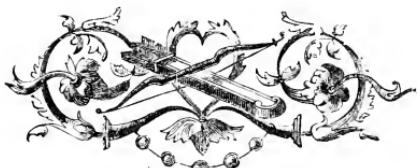
TO THE CAPITALIST.

You may keep your gold, my brother,
Dug out of God's great hills ;
You may keep your banks and counters,
Your railroads and your mills ;
They vex God's earth with blistering bands,
They mar her face, where a city stands,
They oppress the poor, with their helpless hands,
And their puny, weakened wills.

But never on me, my brother,
Shall your yoke of usury fall ;
My hand shall be free, my brother,
And open, indeed, to all ;
And the hills and the vales of God's fair earth,
The far blue sky, where the clouds have birth,
The stars that shine in the heaven's girth,
My very own, I call.

The wealth of the eye, my brother,
Of touch, sound, taste, and smell ;
The treasures of thought and fancy,
Such as no tongue can tell ;
These are the riches that cheer me,
These are the creatures that hear me ;
They come at my call, they are near me,
I know their value well.

I pray you, my burdened brother,
With shares and with stocks opprested,
In folly dividing your baubles,
Filled with eternal unrest ;
Come back like a child to your mother,
She calls you as never another ;
Become her defender, her lover,
The wealth of the Lord is best.



A LAMENT.

What has been done with the lyre I had,
That soothed me in times gone by ?
I want my lyre to weave me a song,
But the fountain of music is dry.

There is work to be done, there are bills to be paid,
That the pot may boil merrily on ;
And our family cares are depressing affairs,
That don't look well when sung in a song.

I know it is wrong to relinquish my lyre,
For the slogan of "root, hog, or die,"
What devotion and faith my poor verse might inspire,
For the truth, though 'tis rough, cannot die.

But how can a man with a family of six,
And living on common day pay,
Spare the time to think as a poet should think,
Or to say what a poet should say ?

COLEBROOK.

[Where I spent eleven years of my boyhood life.]

Where is the village I used to know,
The stores, the shops, the mills,
The steepled churches and busy streets,
That nestled between the hills ?
Those kindly faces and pleasant eyes,
The thin and silvered hair
Of many of those I used to know,
I find are no longer there.

O time, you have cheated my vision sore !
For the children, the women, the men,
As they were in the village I used to know,
I shall never see again.
On the lads that romped at the schoolhouse door,
And the lasses shy and fair,
The greedy world has levied a toll,
And the reaper has gleaned his share.

Now fading away from my yearning eyes,
In the shadows of passing years,
The boys and girls I used to know,—
My village no more appears.

The boys that romp in the fields and woods,
And the girls on the schoolhouse green,
Perchance their parents I may have known,
But these I have never seen.

Farewell, old village I loved so well
While others may love the new,
Though drifting apart on the tide of time,
My heart belongs to you.



INTANGIBLE VERITIES.

There are landscapes that never were painted,
And skies that no brush has portrayed,
I have seen, and their beauty has thrilled me
With impressions that never shall fade.

There are lives all around me that open
Such secrets as books do not hold ;
So common, maybe, but so hallowed
That in language they cannot be told.

There are thoughts that the tongue cannot utter,
And visions not copied in words,
Incoherent but blissful as Eden,
And sweet as the song of birds ;

The caress of a child on the rough cheek,
The pure love of mother or maid,
The holy emotions of wifehood
In bridal garments arrayed.

The impetuous hopes of the scholar,
The yearnings of poet and sage,
Unwritten in books, are recorded
By time on eternity's page.

And God is unceasingly working
With time's great winnowing fan,
And the chaff, the dross, and the evil
Are being blown from His hand.

Intangible souls are borne upward
By currents that cannot be seen ;
But the fruits of the God-driven spirit
Our days and our works shall redeem.

Then fear not, for nothing is wasted ;
The world, with its work and its care,
Is given to perfect our spirits
For the dwelling our God will prepare.



ALONG THE SANDS.

Jennie, love, come nearer, the shores are cold and bleak,
Our eyes are dimmed, our voices low, our steps so slow and
weak ;
Fifty years ago, Jennie, we danced upon the sand,
For life or death united we started hand in hand.

The sea was sparkling 'neath the sun and pleasant was the
shore,
And one by one our babies came and romped along before ;
Yes, one by one, Jennie, their little boats sailed away,
The broken chords we cherish, we could not bid them stay.

We thought they should have tarried to set our boats to sea,
When the winds off shore should fill our sails for eternity ;
But thus it was. I question not, and stranger hands will guide
Our barks on the wintery billows, Jennie, side by side.

The distant sun hangs low in a cold and dreary sky,
Beyond the jutting cliffs where the white waves dash hard by ;
These sands are lonesome, Jennie, so hand in hand we'll go,
With the winds in the sails off shore — God let them blow.

THE SLANDERER.

[An actual character whom I knew. Perhaps you, dear reader, have known him.]

“Hope to die — drop dead,”

That’s what the fellow said.

“It’s just as I tell you,” said he ;

“Now this is confidential, so

Only just us two know,

But it’s true as ever can be.

“I won’t lie a little bit,

I can’t be a hypocrite,

But it’s awful the tale I must tell ;

This wrangling near kills me,

But to tell it now fills me

With joy as deep as — a well.”

Its whiskers were hoary,

But he told me his story,

Adjusted to suit, I presume ;

Being all confidential,

It’s quite inconsequential

How he sang the slanderer’s tune.

“Don’t breathe a word of it

(Or you might have to prove it,—)

But I must be going,” said he ;

Good-bye to you — Mizpah !

Dear fellow, don’t whisper

The slanderer’s tale about me.

THE MAN WHO WRITES VERSES.

[Some persons have been vain enough to think this was intended for them. It has no personal significance.]

Not over bright, he caught at events notable
Happening daily, and scribbled his verse,
Weaving in warnings and truths never dying
Among lines that were bad and rhymes that were worse.

“God pity the simple,” said flippant and witty ones,
“Give him a half dime for charity’s sake ;”
And blessed was the giver to one of God’s little ones,
But truth in the verses the rhymes cannot shake.

No man is to blame for the clay he was made of ;
No man must account for what God never gave ;
Our gifts are in trust, and he who has many
Should scatter them freely from cradle to grave.

Perchance in the reckoning the man who wrote verses,
Having used his poor talents the best that he knew,
Will find many a star in his crown of rejoicing,
His truths all productive, because they were true.

MY FAITH.

I do not know how far away
 My home may be,
I only know that Jesus has
 A home for me.
I cannot tell how dark the path
 That toward it lies,
I know some time the path will end
 In Paradise.

I cannot see, with human eye,
 My heavenly guide,
But now I know that in my heart
 He will abide.
I cannot measure with my love
 His love divine,
Still, resting in His grace, I know
 His love is mine.

I scarce can show you how He bends
 My wayward will,
But He does bend it by His love
 To love fulfill ;
And in my heart I know my King's
 Free spirit reigns
To heal the adversary's wounds
 And break my chains.

THE UNCLEAN HEART.

[For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man.— Matthew xv. 19]

They tell of the open mouths of hell,
Reeking dives, foul-aired saloons ;
Lustful and hateful — expose them well ;
They are pits full of dead men's bones.

But I know of a fouler pit by far,
Dug deep, and hid by a fair outside,
Where a nest of unclean spirits are —
The pit where these dead men died.

A nest of spirits, — wanton-eyed lust,
Jealous envy, of venomous speech,
Swelling pride and mincing mistrust.
And selfish, soulless greed in each.

And up from this nest to the listening brain,
Propelled by passion her channels through,
Come voices subtile, insidious, plain,
As they spoke to Adam, they speak to you.

Dare it, seek it, be brave, be bold,
Disobedience brings subtilty ; thine eye
Shall see as God and judge between
His good works — “Thou shalt not surely die.”

And men are falling, their greedy hands
Itching for lucre, hearts full of crime;
Dead yet living, writhing on blistering sands
Of desperate fear, braving God's reckoning time.



DENIAL COMES SO EASILY.

[Apropos of the way in which "prominent citizens" disclaimed connection with the "Citizens' League" once upon a time.]

With his friends in the upper chamber
Sat Peter. The feast was done,
And the Master must go to the garden ;
The hour of his trial was come.
"I, too, will suffer," said Peter,
"In prison or death for Thee ;"
The Master smiled sadly upon him,
For He knew what the trial would be.

Away from Gethsemane's shadows,
Like sheep, the disciples had fled ;
Judas had earned his silver,
And the Lamb to His slaughter was led.
The maids and the loafing rabble
Saw Peter's scared face at the gate ;
"Surely thou, too, wast with him,—
Him whom the Pharisees hate."

But Peter, the valiant, was angry,
And boldly he published his shame ;
So easy to go with the rabble,
So hard to endure for His name !
When the Pharisees fawn on the Master,
And sinners are chanting His praise,
Peter is bold as a lion,
For that is when bravery pays.

But when all the forces of evil
That stir in the hearts of men
Are turned on the suffering Master,
Who will stand for Him then ?
With haste comes Peter's denial :
" Good people, pray understand
Distinctly, we mind our own business ;
As for Him, why, we don't know the man."



RECOMPENSED.

The weary toil of one long day is over,
And the far west is tinged with glories gone :
I sit and rest, and only think and wonder
What it will be when toiling days are done.

When the winged soul shall rise from this weak body,
And the limp hands shall rest to work no more :
Will God provide us, in His boundless wisdom,
Tasks like these on the eternal shore ?

Or will he give us work for each one fitted,
The labor each desires for each to do,—
The weak encouraged, and the halting pitied,
Impelled with confidence towards the ends in view ?

Ah ! then if comfort such as this repay me
After the failures, I have only gained.
How sweet earth's twilight ! Death itself but hastens
My victory, and why have I complained ?

PHILIP HENRY SHERIDAN.

Ebbing, ebbing, ebbing out like a silent tide,
Ebbing into the shadows, a man in his manly pride ;
The fiery blood of youth, fierce in his warlike prime,
Has stilled in the changeless ocean that laves the shores of
time.

Victor of many battles, hero among a host,
Stricken by the last enemy, shrunk to a very ghost ;
The hand of the ceaseless reaper clutched the golden sheaf,
Painlessly fell the sickle of death, but not as a thief.

For over the grief-swept nation that lies between the seas,
The millions were tearfully waiting to hear of his soul's release ;
Quick beat the heart of the nation, as rose the morning sun,
Like lightning ran the tidings that the vigil of death was done.

Not in the hot blood of battle the soldier bit the dust,
Not in frenzy or in fever, as many of us must ;
But calmly he met the reaper, his soul flowed out like a tide —
A victor in life, and, think you, victor when he died. ?

THE NEXT ROLL-CALL.

[Published in the Mirror in connection with the Decoration Day exercises of 1888.]

Strew well the flowers, old comrades,
It takes more every year,
I'm wondering this time twelvemonth
How many we'll number here.
The ranks are thinning ; the faces
We've met in the years gone past
Are lessening sadly, and whiter
The heads than when we met last.

My vision is fitful, old comrades,
The pictures are jumbled to-night ;
The living and dead together
Seem mixed in a weird twilight ;
And over the graves they are marching
With banners and harness of war,
Silently, swiftly, and grandly,
So grandly my soul is in awe.

The men who came back to the Northland
From facing the cannon's mouth,
The men who dropped bravely in battle
Their bones in the fields of the south,
Offered for freedom and country
So freely the gift that was due,
Approach the great roll-call up yonder,
My vision reveals them to view.

No more with the harness of battle
Mustered into a hell-heated strife,
But they meet on the mountains of Beulah
At the roll-call of endless life.
Then strew well the flowers, old comrades,
We'll meet in the twilight too,
And all march home in the morning,
The faithful, fearless, and true.



COÖS.*

There's a grand and glorious country,
Where the wild winds gently play,
'Mid the hills and wooded summits,
From the ocean far away ;
'Tis a country bright and beautiful
As any earth can boast,
Though no wide sea laves its borders,
And no wild waves beat its coast.

It is filled with happy people,
Who are thrifty, neat, and clean,
Who no despot owe allegiance,
Who obey no king or queen ;
It has rapid, rushing rivers
Scarcely tamed by man's control,
And God's brightest, purest sunshine
Falls upon to light the whole.

It has villages and gardens,
It has farms and happy homes,
And throughout its pleasant valleys
Direful famine never comes ;
It has sons of valiant vigor
Who have fought in freedom's name,
And whose deeds have been recorded
On the brightest page of fame.

'Tis a land of boundless resource :
'Tis a giant fast asleep,
Who shall wake, and rise, and gird himself,
And to brighter glories leap :
Sometime on its rushing rivers
Shall the busy mill-wheel turn,
Giving bread to coming thousands,
Who the giant's power shall learn.

Sometime all along its valleys
To its wood-clad northern bound
Shall penetrate the "iron pathway,"
And the steam horse's stirring sound ;
Sometime on the wooded hillsides
Which adorn the young Coös,
Shall be orchard plots and vineyards
Instead of virgin woods and moss.

Yes, Coös is this grand country
Of whose beauties I would tell,
Filled with forests, farms, and freemen,
And the sound of village bell;
Then all hail to this brave country,
With its prospects and its past,
Brightest of New Hampshire's jewels
And of nature's unsurpassed.

* Written for and published in the "Northern Sentinel" in 1880. The chief interest of the above lies in the fact that a portion of its predictions have been, and the rest are being, fulfilled at the present time.

THE RICH FOOL.

The fool sat down in his strong room to count his money again,
His chest stored full of his gathered gains, a feast for greedy
men :

The dog on the rug whined softly as he mused of his bones
well hid ;

The fool wouldn't hear his restless plaint, or heed it if he did ;
On the black and grimy table the fool unloaded his chest,
To gloat on his petty treasures, but hunger filled his breast.

"Tis not enough," he muttered, and sought with eager haste,
In the littered wealth of the strong box, the yellow gold mis-
placed ;

The fool sat pondering sadly by the side of his emptied box,
Then dreaming, he stood on a city street where mixed humanity
flocks ;

Poor beggar, famished, greedy, with his soul in his sunken eyes,
"Give-give-give-give," good people, for I am starving !" he cries.

So some from the depth of poverty cast in a "widow's mite,"
Some, idly flinging a gold piece, passed out of the beggar's
sight.

Some even pity the beggar (I think not that such pity was
vain),

Though a wolf received their bounty, its motive was just the
same.

The well-pursed beggar *was* starving with fierce, unsatisfied lust.
His tinsel god fled like a phantom of empty, pulseless dust.

The troubled dreams of the fool led his soul to a land most fair,
Bright as the sun ; of golden streets and gates of pearls most rare ;

In its midst stood the wealthy fool, having left his chest behind —

O, if he had it to fill with gold, it would be a feast to his mind ;
He'd gather the gems, he'd pluck the pearls and jewels glistening fair,

And get a mortgage over the rest, if they had mortgages there.

And all the people of that fair land sang songs of victory sweet,
Not one was gathering pearls or gems or digging the gold from the street.

“ Now this must be hell,” mused the wealthy fool ; “ this is hell I trow,

What beggars they are 'mid all this wealth, and never a title they show.”

A voice in the fool's ear whispers : “ I am their title, friend ; I filled their emptied vessels, and their fullness shall not end.”

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A fool, a chest, a flickering lamp, the vision has passed away ;
But the hunger that gnawed at this withered soul had come indeed to stay.

The dog at noon sought, his “ cache,” and got from the bones his fill.

The fool, though gathering gold all day, was a hungry beggar still.

THE TRAIN THAT DID NOT CROSS.

The moonlight fades, the rushing wheels
Slack not through cut o'er stream or fields.
There are mellow lights on the dusky hills ;
Eyes in the darkness, and each one fills
A home on its hillside. Through loosened blind
Like hope they unto my soul have shined ;
Such kindly eyes, but the joy or the woe
Of each home circle we cannot know.

The shadows deepen, and rank on rank
Grim hills reach down to the river bank.
Burned hills where a dead forest stands
Stripped of its glory by ruthless hands.
Our black beast labors, his hoarse breath pours
Up from his open mouth — anon he roars,
And the woods shrink backward, up we glide
Along an echoing mountain side.

Death, the reaper, with sunken eye,
Peers into the coaches as on they fly ;
Counting his harvest, unseen, unknown,
Marking and grimly sealing his own.
They jest, they sleep, the moments fly,
The hills unroll, milestones speed by ;
While thoughtless, thoughtful, grave, and gay,
Move on to an unthought destiny.

The gorge is deep where the trestle spans
The narrow valley with iron bands,
Tempered and tested, and yet who knows
That it will not fall 'neath the car wheel blows ?
Iron, but iron crumbles ; strong, but it fails ;
Swiftly our train sinks on its broken rails.
Our trembling beast is freed by a snapping link ;
Many have sunk into death, we stand on the brink.

They, crushed and torn, jammed in awful wreck
That kind nature with vines and flowers will deck.
Death reaps swiftly, and sadly we bury his prey.
Slowly pitying nature covers the wreck of a day.
Yes, death reaps swiftly. O thoughtless ! O vile !
Like a shadow he follows you all the while,
Unseen but relentless. Your bridges crossed
Tell not of that bridge where your train will be lost.

NIGHT.

The hills rolled up and hid the evening sun,
The stars shone brightly downward one by one,
The steaming earth gave forth its vapory breath,
The air grew still as solitude and death.

The hills receding, forth leaped the mellow moon.
First golden yellow, at length it silvery shone,
Slowly along its bidden path proceeding,
Its path unseen, its myriad legions leading.

To greet the morn, roll back, ye walls of night !
Roll back, ye hills, and greet the glorious light !
'Tis but a little span from day to day,
Unmoved we hasten, while time speeds away.



THE SALVATION ARMY.

In the gathering shadows of evening I stood on a city street,
Twas a market night and the sidewalks held many passing feet ;
Some slow, some halting, some drunken, some brisk as with
work to do,

The tapping cane of the blind man,— each passed in a short
review.

The many lights of the city lit avenues far and wide,
Glinting on thrifty dwellings and the temples, a city's pride ;
The snow in the air is icy with the frigid zero blast,
It swirls 'round the corners in eddies, and settles thick and fast.

Hark ! what in the distance coming, with banner and music
and song ?

Why do the people listen as the troop comes marching on ?
They come in review ; we see them ; and one thought fills many
a soul

As they sing the songs of salvation and Christ the way and goal.

Poor and simple and needy, as the world counts human need,
Jostled and jeered and spurned, as they sing and pray and plead,
Searching in hedges and highways, friends of the outcast and
lost.

Counting not life as dear to them, nor heeding the biting frost.

God has sent many servants, methought, but these are the last,
Perhaps the feast will be ready when these are fully past.
And then in spirit I crossed the gulf to the fair palace gate,
Saw the banquet and heard the songs of the feasters, small
and great.

The poor, the hungry, the naked, the simple, the blind, the lame
Sang again the songs of salvation and victory in his name.
We are glad for the Salvation Army, by whatever name 'tis
known,
We are glad for the humble Christians bringing back to the
Lord his own.

Brave army now rejoicing in Christ a Saviour's birth,
Brave tireless band of recruiters gathering the harvest of earth,
Work on, for your triumph comes, the day star shines on high,
And thousands will bless your labors in the reckoning by
and by.

IN THE NIGHT.

The night hangs cloudy and sullen, on nature's shrouded form,
The winds hold carnival, and ice dust whets the edge of the
storm.

The empty streets of the city, the frowning hills and plain,
Resound to the tread of the giants pulling the midnight train.

Two flaming torches streaming into the night,
Pigmies feeding and guiding them in their flight.
Down the dark valleys, by sheeted river banks,
Grim hills before them with solid front and flanks.

A plunge, a hoarse gasp, the Titans sink from view;
They pierce the hills that hinder and so pass through.
In other vales, by other streams, the little masters guiding,
The shrill, shrieking giants come forth from their earthy
hiding.

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Down the grade, on the curve where the highway crosses
the track,

A man lies clutching a bottle, the gathering snow on his back;
Kicked out of the tavern yonder and seeking a drunkard's home
He stumbles, stupidly muttering, and lies on the iron alone.

At home a brute and a terror, ugly, vile, and profane,
A drunken lout at the groggery, a weak and blear-eyed shame,
A wreck of a man, a rack-o-bones 'twould seem a mercy to kill,
Lying there in a drunken stupor,—a human being still.

Oh ! woe to the world because of sin,—the devils clutch
their prey.

One crawls from the half filled bottle, one meets him by the way;
“ Ha, this is our prize,” they clamor, “ we’ve steered him
about for years ; ”

In the gloom the poor follow’s good angel retires in silence
and tears,

And round the curve with a wild shriek the trembling engines
glide

With flaming torches and panting breath, but the dead are
not terrified.

Over the crossing, a crackle of bones, a smearing of rags
and gore,

The train moves on with its badge of death, but the life had
gone on before.

The pitiful snow has shrouded the bones when morning breaks,
Would it could blot the curse of rum out for its victims’ sakes !
The smeared wheels tell part of the story, a shattered bottle
the rest,

From a drunkard’s home to a drunkard’s grave he goes unmourned, unblest.

ONE HOPE.

'Twas New Year's night, and up and down the land,
Brooding above ten thousand homes there lay
The shadow of death, unseen, unknown, the sands
Of life in many channels ran away.

The wind around the gloomy gables howling
Bore dirges low and sorrow-laden strains ;
'Tis midnight now, but joy comes in the morning :
The year is born, and time has ceased her pains.

And still, pressed on by never ceasing motion,
Events take shape and fade from us away ;
Fade from us for a time in the eternal ocean,
Their impress only with our spirits stay.

Yesterday, today, tomorrow, stalking swiftly past,
Resting never on square or lane, or street,
Bring in their burdens, perplexing, mixed and fast,
Burdens that each and all of us must meet.

Oh ! this is life which each new year discovers,
And mingled with it are the dregs of death,
Are broken hearts, seared hands, our friends and lovers,
Blown forth and from us by Time's fatal breath.

Above the graves of ages gone, we glide
Among the actors in a fading scene
That fades and vanishes like an ebbing tide;
With mortal hands we reach and grasp—a dream.

One hope remains, amid the sweep of ages
One anchor holds, fast cast within the veil.
In Christ, the righteous, sung by priests and sages,
Man can be saved, else God himself can fail.



A WEB OF WORSTED.

Washing and sorting the fleece
Till white as driven snow,
To make ready the filling and warp,
Spooling it row upon row.
Hands that are wrinkled and old,
Hands that are young and fair,
The gay and the sad together
These thousand threads prepare.

Into a forest of looms
Go these threads of white and gray,
The cotton and wool together
From the weaver's spool will play.
While into the cloth unnoticed
Are woven the buds and flowers.
The master is guiding the shuttle,
And the web tells off the hours.

Then into a place where busy hands
Follow the guiding eye with care,
Purging the cloth of the coarser strands
Leaving it white and fair.
Ah! wondrous is the chemist's art,
Combining with consummate skill
The dyes that various shades impart,
Well known to the master's will.

And thus is woven each human life
As the worsted web is made,
By many hands our lives are touched
E'er in fullness at last arrayed
But the *Master* is guiding the shuttle,
His wisdom is weaving the strands,
Our beginnings and our ends are His,
Our lives are in His hands.



AT LONG BEACH.

I stroll in the gathering twilight,
Along the glistening strand,
Where the waves flash among the pebbles,
And reach, and reach to the land.

I sit on a round, worn boulder,
In the cove by the Nubble light,
And look out at the somber waters,
Look into the deep'ning night.

Away in the distance gleaming,
The star of Boon Island shines ;
Guiding the weary travelers
On the ocean's varying lines.

And farther still, to the southward
Of Star and Smutty Nose,
Just over the disc of waters,
The White Island signal glows.

Beyond the headland's brow,
Beyond the rocks and the sands,
Beyond the narrows, the harbor lies,
And a grim old city stands.

Beyond the waters that lap the sand,
Beyond the waves of the deep,
Lie the peaceful shores of my mother land,
And 'tis there my kindred sleep.

Though many years have come and gone,
Long years I cannot number,
Once more among these graves I'll roam,
And think, and dream, and wonder,

How vast is life, how sure is death,
How soon Time's night shuts o'er us,
With here and there a shining mark,
Like the beacon lights before us.

The peaceful wavelets ripple free
And flash on the pebbly shore.
Lives meet lives verged on eternity,
And drift apart forevermore.



SUNRISE AMONG THE WHITE MOUNTAINS.

I stood at the foot of the mountains
Where the wild Ammonoosuc plays,
At daybreak in summer, with the sunlight
Just touching their tops with its rays.

And as slowly the darkness departed
From valley and glen and nook,
I climbed up a neighboring hillside,
Where fell a clear, babbling brook.

Still higher and higher I climbed,
For the gray morning mists had come,
And with shadows had covered the valley
Away from the rising sun.

At length on a ledge I halted,
Half-way to the summit, and gazed
From my feet to the walls of the mountains
O'er the phantom-like sea as it raised.

Ye grand and glorious summits,
Nobly your names ye wear,
Washington, Adams and Jefferson,
Far off in the upper air.

I shout o'er the noiseless billows,
O'er the valley that lies below,
The reply comes back from the mountains
In a voice that is sweet and low.

O had I a boat with sails
To plow that billowy sea,
From the hills to the mountains gliding
As the light winds wafted me !

How free seems the air of the morning,
E'er the heat of the day has come,
E'er we seek the cool glen where the cascade falls,
To hide from the burning sun !

It is now, when darkness is routed,
And daytime floods the earth,
When the gathering mists are lifting,
That thoughts like these have birth.



THE KING OF DAY.

Over the hills of morning
Rides the King of Day,
His polished lances flashing,
Driving the night away.

Over the huge blue mountains,
Down through the dark ravine,
Chasing the flying shadows
Over the lake and stream.

Myriads of feathered songsters
Caroling welcoming lays
To the life and light of the world,
The beautiful King of the days.

Happy in God's bright sunshine,
The whole world blessed with His love,
Give thanks for the King of the daytime
To the mightier power above.

THE MILL OPERATIVE.

Day after day, as time drags wearily by,
Sometimes heavy with grief and ready to die,
Sometimes buoyant with hope, gleeful and gay,
Hour after hour the slow time slips away.

We hear the buzzing belts, the jarring wheels,
The click, click, as the shuttle the driver feels ;
We watch the bobbing heads whose busy brains
Weave thought with every thread, with wearying pains.

Earning a scanty meed, wearing life away,
Bright eyes growing dim, hair turning gray,
Hands made weak with toil, faces faded and thin,
Fashioning beautiful fabrics for some one to revel in.

This is our tale of life, alas ! we know too well ;
We start at the sound of a gong, and march when we hear
the bell.

There is morning air to breathe, and flowers of many hues,
But the meed we earn must suffice us, God's chiefest wealth
to lose.

There are some, who, with smiles of hope, go forth to daily
toil,

A fortune to win is theirs, and life has a glittering foil.
Others there are in the throng that crowds the wide mill gate,
Whose faces bear tales unspoken, of defeat in a fight with fate.

God pity the poor who labor with never a hope of gain,
If their scanty meed the body will feed with not a scrap
for the brain.
God grant them some of the flowers that bloom along life's
highway,
And a final triumphal entry to the realms of eternal day.



A LESSON.

From every flower that blooms beside the way
A lesson may be learned by you and I;
That all the acts of every flying day
Will leave their impress on eternity.

For "not a sparrow falleth to the ground,"
And e'en the lilies in the field,
But God shall see, and He Himself shall crown,
And in them show his power to guide and shield.

And though we live to bloom in deserts drear,
And all unknown our life's work do and die,
He knows thy labor, He has heard thy prayer;
He will reward thee grandly by and by.



OUR TALENTS.

Though we are not masters of five talents,
Nor the proud possessors of ten,
With that which the Lord has given us,
Let us all do what we can.

We are not placed in earth's vineyard
To slothfully slumber and shirk,
But to take up our talents rather,
And go out in the world and work.

So that, when the good Lord of the vineyard
Shall welcome us home to our rest,
He may say, "Well done, faithful servant,
Come taste of the joy of the blest."



HUNGER DOES NOT REASON.

Was it vision, fact, or dream,
Spread before me in the night?
How the hungry wolves did raven;
Masters fled but found no haven;
Vassal dogs that stood between,
Whined in terror and aghast.

Was it vision, dream, or fact;
That the workmen, unemployed,
Turned to fierce wolves, fanged and gaunt,
Driven by the spurs of want,
Till the smiling land grew black,
And its masters were destroyed?

Be it fact or dream or vision,
Its dread presence haunts me still.
Will the world grow wise in season?
Starving labor does not reason;
And if suffering brings collision,
It will plunder, burn, and kill.

IDLENESS.

By permission, written by P. H. A. Claflin.

Why stand ye all the day idle,
And in indolence loiter away
All the bright, golden-winged moments,
The gems in the crown of the day?
While life hurries on like a shadow,
Opportunities come and are past,
Till with neither a crown nor a scepter
Ye halt at death's challenge at last.

Why stand ye all the day idle?
Go enter the lists among men.
There are arms for the contest abundant,
Take a spade, if you can't wield a pen.
The world is a broad field of battle,
And no man worthy the name
But can win the sweet garland of comfort,
Though few wear the laurel of fame.

Why stand ye all the day idle,
While the sun of the seedtime shines on ?
Know you not that life, in its seasons,
Will soon bring the harvest along ?
And if, in the harvest approaching,
The fine, luscious fruit you would bear,
Take heed, while the plant is yet tender,
To weed out the thorn and the tare.

LOUIE LAUREL.

It is night, and gloomy London
Lies still in the arms of sleep;
And the murmurs of the daytime
Are not heard upon the street,

Darkly lies the fog o'er London
And the river flows along
To its far off destination
In the North Sea, and is gone.

In a dimly lighted chamber,
Far above the silent street,
Louie Laurel lies unconscious,
Faintly breathing in his sleep,

While beside him sits his mother,
Sadly watching through the night,
For perhaps the flame of fever
Will have turned by morning light.

List — the old Tower clock is striking;
Slowly, and with measured stroke,
Until twelve has been recorded
On its mighty disc of oak.

Louie, as the clock stops striking,
Wakes and whispers, “Mamma, say,
Mamma, has the darkness ended —
Tell me, is it almost day?”

“ My poor child, lie still and slumber,”
Softly said the mother then,
“ Soon the darkness will have ended,
Morning soon will come again.”

“ Mamma, I am sure 'tis morning,
For the light is breaking now ;
There are, O such pretty angels !
They are calling. Mayn’t I go ?

“ O my child, you cannot leave me,
Stay, you must not, *shall not* die.”
But the child is with the angels
And his Saviour in the sky.

All is o'er, and gloomy London
Lies in unresponsive sleep ;
And the silent fog hangs coldly
In the dark, deserted street.

But another life has ended,
And among the angel throng
Another sweet and pure child spirit
Learns heaven’s redemption song.

OH, FUTURE!

“Oh, Future!” I cry out in darkness,
“Why hid’st thou Life’s secrets from me?”
But Echo repeats my sad query,
The darkness alone I can see.

And Life still keeps on like a timepiece ;
My days like the forest leaves fall ;
My bones will soon rest by my fathers’,
And I shall be least of all.

The nameless heart-yearnings of mortals,
The groping in darkness for light,
The reaching for noble and high things,
And striving to do what is right,

Shall this all be profitless labor ?
Shall virtue ne’er meet its reward ?
Must Death turn our spirits to ashes
Along with our vile flesh and blood ?

I question, nor need Echo answer ;
The Spirit within gives reply ;
“Thy body may rot, for ‘tis carrion,
The Soul of Man never shall die.”

A VIEW FROM LOMBARD'S HILL.

One night at sunset, I was on the hill
That overlooks the village in the vale,
The stores, the churches, the noisy mill
And shade trees in the twilight pale.

While just across the valley I could see
Monandock rising toward the cloud-flecked sky ;
Above the river, winding recklessly,
Stealing the meadows as it passed them by.

And towards the East from whence at early dawn,
By little and little the day invades the sky ;
Dixville's dark, massive shadow, rent and torn,
With bold, bare shoulders meets the eye.

But *au revoir* old hills, for even now
My cows are lowing, cool night breezes blow,
And far and near on many a green hill's brow
The tinkling bells are sounding sweet and low.

AS SEEN AT SIXTEEN.

This world is a field of action
So wondrous, wide, and grand,
That it gives a place for the lowest,
The lowest of every land.

If they but strive to gain it,
Strive with all their might,
With a purpose naught can conquer,
At length they'll win the fight.

And I must win my laurels,
And gain a place and name,
Or I shall be left in darkness,
And my face be hid with shame.

Nor is the world a place for dreamers,
Or idle ones, or drones;
'Tis the place for men of action,
Who can face it, if need be, alone.

Men not afraid of labor,
Wherever their place may be;
Whether in office, or mill, or shop,
Or out in the ships at sea.

It is men we want, not idlers,
Who live not,—only stay,
Be alive on this field of action,
And improve it while you may.

THE CITY FOLKS.

They are coming from the city,
From the sandy ocean shore ;
Coming, doctors and professors,
And fifty thousand more.

From colleges and Congress,
From office, shop, and mills ;
They are riding through our valleys,
They are climbing up our hills.

They are gunning every wood lot,
They are fishing every brook,
Catching pesky little minnows
For the servant maids to cook.

The hotels are swarming with them,
And the coaches all bring loads.
They never come in driplets,
But always come in floods.

Still there's something in their presence,
With their pockets filled with chink,
Which is not so disagreeable
As some grumblers may think.

So we'll welcome to the country,
To our ledges, fields and pines,
All our weary city neighbors
Who'll come down well with the dimes.

THINK OF THE POOR.

Dear friends, as you go to the mountains,
Where the merry brooks dance in the wood,
As you drink of the heaven-born fountains,
As you bathe in the lake's shining flood,

As you grace the cool beach of the ocean,
Or recline on the cushions of ease,
Far away from the city's commotion,
Where all is to comfort and please.

Just think of the children of hunger,
That herd in the quarters of want,
The stifling dens of our city,
Where poverty sits naked and guant.

Oh, God pity the poor in the city,
These days of languor and heat.
The mothers and babes, God pity,
To whom life is a burden and cheat;

And may He raise some one to help them,
And save from the burdens they bear.
For man is so cruel and thoughtless;
For them there is no one to care.

POPLAR LEAVES.

There's a squirrel chatting, chitting,
 In the gray-green branch above me.
To his mate beneath him sitting
 Where the brooklet gurgles free ;
And this sprightly chirp makes rhythm
 With the playful winds of heaven,
As they press against the petals
 Of the gray-green poplar tree.

See the round leaves dancing, glancing.
 As the sunshine breaks the shadow
And looks in with glow entrancing
 Through the fog above the meadow,
Floating, melting in the morning air.
 Squirrel, you and I will share
In the pleasure of the dancing
 Poplar leaves, this morning fair.

Poplar leaves ! Though mute, you are showing
 What I've sometimes longed to know, —
Truth, indeed, that's worth the knowing, —
 How that all things here below,
Each is fitted to the other,
 Each is made to fit each other,
As the mission of the poplar leaves
 Is to dance for winds that blow.

FINALE.

Dear critic, wipe your pen,
And save your time and space;
To every charge I *nolo* plead
With firm, unblushing face.

This little book I send
To friends I may not know,
Seeking to make a friend
Wherever it may go.

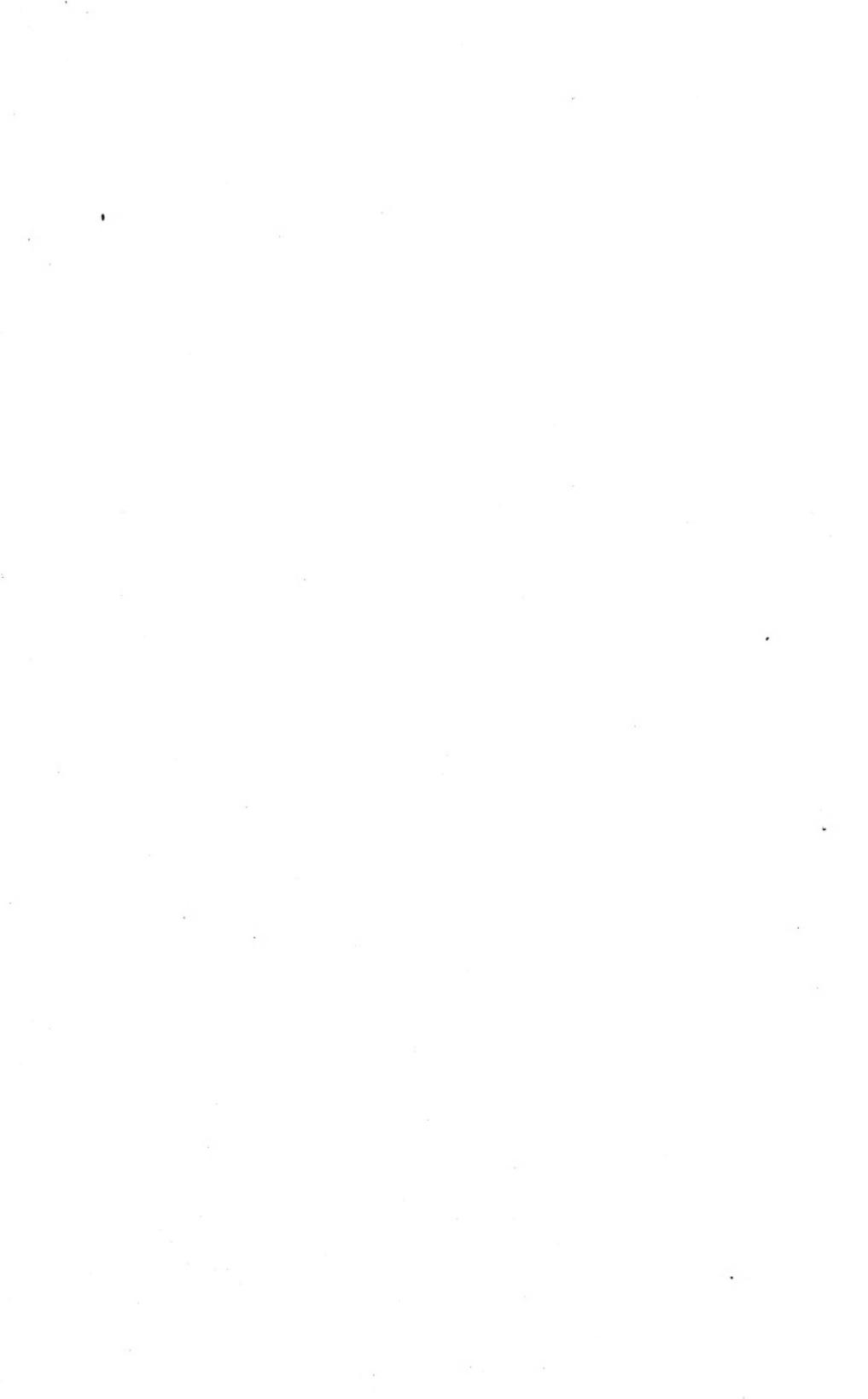
If any page shall please,
Or any thought illume,
Skip that which disagrees
And where you like, resume.

And when we meet again,
Beneath whatever skies,
May we see clearer then,
With true and friendly eyes.



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